



Mililani Allen

In the last ten years the greatest change that has come upon the hula has been the increase of respect, scholarship, and interest. People have come to realize that it is a classical art of the Hawaiian culture. The style of dancing has changed because the general community has placed a greater emphasis on the dance itself rather than the language and poetry of the chants. There are so many of us that don't speak the language and don't understand the poetry. So rather than the words of the mele being important it is now the emotion of the dance. I don't look upon this as negative. It's just another shift that has happened.

It was my mother who got me interested in the hula at the age of six and I started my formal training under Aunty Maiki Aiu Lake at the age of eleven. I studied under Aunty Maiki for three years but then I took on other interests and I went away to college. It was during college that I realized how much I didn't know about the hula and it gave me a great urge to come back into a halau and learn. After graduation I returned to Hawaii for good and it was at that point that I took Aunty Maiki's course for kumu hula. Aunty Maiki was my great influence while I was a haumana and she remains a great influence on me today. Her style of teaching was to train all of us in the mechanics and importance of good research and written documentation. As a kumu in the classroom her style was talk story, very easygoing, and she made the student want to learn with her own excitement and desire for learning.

Aunty Maiki would teach us the chants by writing it on the chalkboard and then chanting it to us. We would repeat the lines of the chant and then we would be allowed to write it down in our notebooks. She was very positive. I think that was the most distinctive part of her teaching style. She didn't make fun of you or put you down if you did something wrong. You always came away from the class with good feelings.

After my uniki with Aunty Maiki I studied with Aunty Edith Kanakaole who was not that much different from Aunty Maiki. There was such a giving atmosphere to Aunty Edith that made me feel at ease and want to give of myself too. A lot of my own style of dancing has been directly influenced by Aunty Edith. I can't say that there is a style of dancing that is all my own. My hula kahiko is very simple which I feel makes it traditional.

I began to teach ten years ago in 1973 because I wanted another alternative that would let me spend more time with my children. I think the greatest service my teaching offered was it created a place for people, mostly women, to belong and to come to as an outlet from their families and their regular lives. What was sacrificed was the privacy of my family. Whether that sacrifice was worth it is a tough question. The reason the family's privacy is lost is that the halau members become part of the family. Whenever personal problems arise I have to give time to everyone---even if they are not my immediate family. I think it's worth it because when I explain the situation to my kids they can understand it and I think it has made them better and stronger people.

The hula kahiko has changed but I think it's best to keep an open mind. My advice to my students is don't put down someone because you think you know it all. You have to keep an open mind about people who want to study hula, about other members of other halaus, and different styles. So many times I hear other people criticizing another style. In the hula there are so many different styles of dancing, so many lines of knowledge, who's to say what is right or wrong? We don't know. I don't think there was ever one style. I don't think there was ever one right or wrong.



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It was my mother <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ got me interested in the hula at the age of six and I started my formal training under Auntie Maiki Aiu Lake at the age of eleven. I studied under Auntie Maiki for three years but then I took on other interests and I went away to ~~the~~ ~~mainland~~ college. It was during college that I realized how much I didn't know about the hula and it gave me a great urge to come back into a halau and learn. After graduation I returned to Hawaii for good and it was at that point that I took Auntie Maiki's course for kumu hula. Auntie Maiki was my great influence while I was a haumana and she remains a great influence on me today. Her style of teaching was to train all of us in the mechanics and importance of good research and written documentation. As a kumu in the classroom her style was talk story, very easygoing, and she made the student want to learn ~~my~~ her own excitement and desire ~~abundant~~ learning.  
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The hula kahiko has changed but I think it's best to keep an open mind. My advice to my students is don't put down someone because you think you know it all. You have to keep an open mind about people who want to study hula, about other members of other halaus, and different styles. So many times I hear other people <sup>criticizing</sup> (putting down) another style. In the hula there are so many different styles of dancing, so many lines of knowledge, who's to say what is right or wrong? We don't know. I don't think there was ever one style. I don't think there was ever one right or wrong.

Good!

Miti Allen

My mother got me interested in the hula at the age of six. I don't remember now if I was interested in the hula or I was made to go and take hula. I studied with a lady in Wahiawa for just a little while. I stopped taking hula but at the age of eleven I went to M Aunty Maiki's halau. I took u hula from her for three years until I was 14. At that point I stopped and took on other interests. I went away to college. From then most of my interest in the hula grew from being away from home. It was after I went away to college that I realized how much I didn't know. It gave me a great urge to come back and take hula. I returned and took hula for a summer. I graduated from college spent a year away on the mainland and then returned to Hawaii for good. It was at that point that I took Aunty Maiki's course for kumu hula

Her style of teaching was for all of us to study, do research and keep notes. As a kumu in the classroom her style is talk-story very easygoing. She made the student want to learn by her own excitement and desire about learning. She was very positive. I think that's the most distinctive part of her teaching style. She didn't make fun of you, she didn't put you down if you did something wrong. You always came away with good feelings. Aunty Maiki would teach us the chants by writing it on the board and chanting it to us and we would repeat how she said it. and we would be able to write it down.

Aunty Maiki was the great influence on me while I was studying and she remains a great influence on me today. After I uniki with Aunty Maiki I studied with Aunty Edith Kanakaole. There was such a giving atmosphere to Aunty Edith that was not much different from Aunty Maiki. It just made you feel at ease and want to give of yourself too. A lot of my own style of dancing has been directly influenced by Aunty Edith.

I can't say that there is a style of dancing that is all my own but it is developing. It's been a long time coming up but it's developing. My style is very simple which I feel makes it traditional. very traditional. I haven't gone into a lot of high dramatics.

I began to teach 10 years ago in 1973. I started to teach because initially it was another alternative to a style of living. I have a masters degree in education and one of the things that I cannot stand is having to punch in and punch out. Teaching the hula allowed me to take another

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alternative that let me spend more time with my children. This along with several people in the community telling me to start teaching the hula because we needed a good hula teacher out here.

When I went to go study with Aunty Maiki, the farthest thing from my mind was that I would become a hula teacher. When Aunty Maiki opened up her hula classes I went into it because I wanted to learn hula kahiko. I later found out that the class was to train kumu. I didn't know that that's what everyone was there for.

Hula kahiko is the ancient style of dancing. It is not done to musical instruments. I think in the last five years hula kahiko has really enjoyed a gigantic surge. I think the interest in it remain strong but it will level off. There are so many people that are interested in it now. There are a lot of people who are almost living it. They haven't gone back to the old practices of learning the hula and living in the halau but the hula has become a big part of ~~xx~~ a lot of people's lives. A lot of daily philosophy can be taken from the hula.

I think the hula auwana will become much more serious. I think it will become more structured and hopefully the shows in Waikiki will become more authentic. Hopefully they won't cater to only commercial needs, the impulse to make everything so flamboyant.

I think the greatest sacrifice is the family. I try to get my children involved with what I'm doing.

Whether the sacrifice has been worth it is a tough question. The reason the family is sacrificed is that the halau members become part of the family. Whenever personal problems arise I have to give time to everyone--even if they are not my immediate family. I think it's worth it because when I explain the situation to my kids they can understand it and I think it makes them better people. The reward you get from the students is the benefit.

I think the greatest service I give is to offer a place for people, mostly women, to come to as an outlet from their families and their regular lives.

Hula gives the Hawaiian people a sense of belonging.

I think it's best to keep an open mind. don't put down someone because you think you know it all. You have to keep an open mind about people who want to be in hula, about ~~people who want to be~~ other halau, about different styles. Not to be closed. So many times I hear other people putting down another style. In the hula there are so many different styles of dancing, so many lines of knowledge who's to say what is right or wrong, we don't know. I don't think there was ever one style, I don't think there was ever one right or wrong.

The greatest change in the hula has been the respect; it has come from the community now. There are more people studying the ~~hula~~ hula today. The style of dancing has changed because there are so many of us that don't speak the language and don't understand the poetry. So rather than the word being important it is now the emotion of the dance. Today people are only interested and caught up in the emotion of the dance. I don't look upon this as negative. It's just a shift that has happened.